NOVENA
TO OUR
LADY of LOURDES.

Mary Ego
Fisherville

Our Lady of Lourdes.

THE village of Lourdes is in the South of France. Near it is a cliff, called the "Roches Massabielle," at whose base are three openings, as of caves, one above the other. On the 11th February, 1858, a peasant girl, Bernadette Soubirous, aged 14, went to gather dry branches near the cliff. Whilst there, she suddenly beheld near her, at the mouth of the largest cavern, a Lady of supreme loveliness, clad in white, with a white mantle over her head and dropping down to her feet, on each of which glittered a golden rose. A sash of blue encircled her waist and its ends floated to the ground. A rosary with a golden cross completed the vision. The Lady bade the shepherdess come to the grotto for several days; and on the 25th of February, told her to drink and wash at a fountain. There was no fountain near; but the child crept on her knees to the spot pointed out, and removing some dry leaves, scratched the ground, when a thin thread of water appeared. Bernadette drank a few drops and washed herself. On the next day, the flow was more copious, and miraculous cures were wrought. Shortly afterwards, 100,000 litres of water were poured out daily. Miracle followed miracle in quick succession. A magnificent church has been erected on the Roches Massabielle; Pilgrims flock to it. The water is carried to all parts of the world, and countless miracles are wrought by it.

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OUR LADY OF LOURDES.

As she appeared to Bernadette, on the 11th Feb., 1858.

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Preface to the Third Edition.

THIS little book so pleased and edified the translator during the happy hours he spent at the grotto of Lourdes, that he thought it would be welcome to thousands at home.

A few modifications have made the novena quite as fit for use on our side of the ocean, as at the holy shrine itself.

While mainly intended for the sick,—and at the sick-bed its lessons and prayers will be found a God-send,—it is equally adapted for any other class of persons who have some special favor to ask, in behalf of themselves or others; and who is there that has nothing to ask?

May our sweet Lady's blessing attend all who use it.

The rapid sale of the first and second editions has shown both how wide-spread is the devotion to Our Lady of Lourdes, and how great was the need of a little manual like this. It is hoped that this third revised edition will be rendered still more acceptable and useful by the addition of the Litany of Our Lady of Lourdes, which may be recited each day before or after the Prayer.

The Apparition

of our

Blessed Lady at Lourdes.

A BRIEF account of the apparition will enable the reader to perform this novena more understandingly and profitably. Whoever has read the Old and New Testaments, knows that very many heavenly apparitions are therein related. The history of the Church shows that these were not confined to the biblical times, but have in all ages been made use of by Almighty God, for purposes of special warning or instruction, to give heavenly encouragement to religious undertakings, or solemn approval to some truth or fact. And no one can have failed to remark how often, in these apparitions, it is the poor and little ones that He chooses, as His messengers, to the great and wise ones of the

world. These considerations are enough to prepare any impartial mind for the following perfectly authenticated facts.

During the year 1858, it pleased Divine Providence that the Holy Mother of God should appear eighteen times near the little town of Lourdes, in France, at the foot of the Pyrenees. The favored being chosen as the recipient of these heavenly visitations, was Bernadette Soubirous, a shepherd girl of thirteen years, who from her earliest childhood had been a model of piety and angelic innocence.

On the 11th of February in that year, at about 11 o'clock in the forenoon, Bernadette went with her sister and another young girl to gather sticks for her poor mother's fire, along the banks of the Gave, a torrent that runs past Lourdes. Their occupation led them step by step to the foot of a spur of the mountains called in the patois of the neighborhood *Massabielles*, that is, the *Old Rocks*. It rises almost perpendicularly from near the bank of the Gave; and in its base,

at the level of the ground, are the cavern and the niche in the rock just above it, since then so renowned under the name of the Grotto of Lourdes. While Bernadette was in a stooping posture in front of the Massabielle, she heard a noise as of a rushing wind. Looking around, she saw that the branches of the poplars did not move, and judged she was mistaken. In a moment the same sound came again, and again looking up, with a cry which fright smothered in her throat, and trembling in every limb, she fell on her knees. She saw a Lady of heavenly beauty, and surrounded by a light of heavenly brightness, standing in the rocky niche above the cavern. Her face beamed with mingled majesty and sweetness. Her garments were as white as the mountain snow. A girdle, blue as the heavens, hung in two long bands from her waist nearly to her feet. A white veil fell behind from her head to the hem of her garment. On each of her feet was a rose of golden color. In her hands she

held a chaplet, whose milk-white beads were gliding one by one through her fingers; but her lips moved not; she appeared not to be reciting the rosary, but to be listening to its recitation as it rose to her ear from every corner of the world. She made the sign of the cross. Bernadette did the same, and, her fright diminishing beneath the sweet smile of the beautiful Lady, she commenced to say the rosary. Just as the kneeling child finished the last decade, the Lady disappeared. She had been visible only to Bernadette; neither her sister nor their young companion had seen anything.

The parents, puzzled by so strange a story, were at first unwilling that the children should return to the place. Only on the third day after were they allowed to go. They were kneeling but a few minutes before the grotto, when Bernadette's suddenly transfigured face showed that the brightness of the lovely Lady was again shining on her. This second apparition was quite like the first.

Three days after, the child again obtained permission to go to the holy spot, and this time accompanied by others. Again appeared the heavenly Lady, her presence visible only to Bernadette, but unmistakably evidenced to the others by the transfiguration of her gazing countenance. This time, on being questioned by the child, the Lady spoke, and asked her to come daily for fifteen days. In answer to Bernadette's promise, the Lady said: "And I promise to render you happy, not in this but in the other world." She added that she wished many people to come to the spot on the succeeding days.

The child was faithful to her promise, and as the event became noised abroad, an immense multitude of all classes daily accompanied her to the grotto. Many went only to test the case; but the most skeptical became convinced, as they looked at the beaming face of the entranced girl, that it was no deception nor hallucination, but a beautiful reality.

Every day the Lady appeared, with the exception of one, on which occasion Bernadette had to return home filled with sorrow at not having seen her. But this exception seemed to come only as another proof that the child's ecstatic condition during those happy moments was not the result of any nervousness or imagination on her own part, but the effect alone of a heavenly apparition.

On one occasion the lady told her to *pray for sinners.* Another time she gave her this message: "Now go, my child, and tell the priests that a chapel must be built on this spot, and that the people must come to it in processions." Another day the Lady exclaimed with a look of unutterable sadness: "Penance! penance! penance!" and the child was heard to repeat it aloud after her; and again on that day the Holy Virgin commanded her to pray for sinners, and to kiss the ground as an act of penance for the conversion of sinners.

When the child carried the Lady's message to the parish priest, the good

Father, in order to guard against deception, told her to ask the Lady that, as a sign of the truth of the apparitions, the wild rose-bush which grew out of the rock beneath the niche should bloom. The Lady, on hearing the request, only smiled, and on that occasion said nothing about it. But soon she was to give a far more wonderful proof than that which had been asked. One day therefore she said to Bernadette: "Now, go drink and wash in the fountain," pointing at the same time to a spot in the grotto which was perfectly dry, and in which no water had ever been seen. Bernadette, not seeing how she could otherwise comply with the command, started toward the waters of the Gave. But the Holy Virgin stopped her: "Do not go there," said she; "I have not spoken of drinking from the Gave; go to the fountain; it is there," pointing again to the same spot in the grotto. Obedient to the sign, the child began to scoop the earth with her fingers. A mysterious water rose beneath her

hands, and drop by drop filled the little hollow she had made. Muddy though it was at first, the obedient child drank of it, as she had been commanded. In a few moments it was running in a slender stream toward the amazed spectators. The miraculous fountain had sprung up, which steadily increased in volume till it poured out, as it does now, about a hundred thousand quarts a day, and whose waters, carried to every part of the world, have been the means of very many authentic miraculous cures, the first of which took place in the town of Lourdes itself, just after the appearance of the fountain.

On the 25th of March, the festival of the Annunciation, took place what may be considered the most important of all the apparitions. Bernadette had been advised to ask the Lady that she would be pleased to tell her name. When, therefore, the vision on that day appeared as usual, Bernadette said to her: "O Lady, be so kind as to tell me who you are and what is your name." Three

times she asked the question without other reply than a smile of ineffable sweetness, and each time that she asked it, the glory and beauty of the Lady seemed to grow greater and more wonderful. A fourth time she asked: "O Lady, I beseech you be so kind as to tell me who you are and what is your name." This time, the blessed Lady unclasped her hands, slipped her chaplet over her right arm, first raised her hands toward heaven, then joined them before her breast, and gazing up with a look of unutterable happiness and gratitude, said:

"I AM THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION."

Having so spoken, she disappeared. These few words, by far the most important fact in the apparitions, have marked the grotto of Lourdes as the heaven-appointed special sanctuary of the Immaculate Conception; and all the wonders that have made it famous, redound to the honor of that glorious privilege of our Blessed Mother.

As to the long series of tests, which

during fifteen years have placed the authenticity of these events beyond doubt, and have attracted to Lourdes the devotion of Christians throughout the world, a word must suffice.

During several months, the civil authorities of the town, goaded on by the infidel press of the country, resorted to every artifice of cunning and violence, in order to bring discredit on the apparitions and to drive away the thousands who flocked from all parts to the grotto. Their endeavors only brought shame on themselves, and added evidence to the events, and were finally put a stop to by a positive command from the Emperor Napoleon III.

The ecclesiastical authorities, being petitioned from every quarter to investigate these wonderful occurrences and pass sentence on them, at length took up the matter. The Bishop of Tarbes, to which diocese Lourdes belongs, appointed a commission of prudent and learned men, who during four years sifted most thoroughly the evidence for the apparitions and for the

miraculous cures effected by the water of the fountain; and only after so long a time, spent in the most careful investigations, the result of which was to place the authenticity of the facts beyond all question, did the bishop publish his approval of the same, and officially declare that the faithful might hold them for certain.

In a Brief of Sept. 4th, 1869, our Holy Father, Pope Pius IX., indirectly confirmed the above decision of the bishop, by congratulating Henry Lasserre on the masterly manner in which, in his book, "Notre Dame de Lourdes," he had "so proved and established the truth of the recent apparition of the most clement Mother of God, that the very struggle of human malice against the divine mercy serves but to bring out more forcibly the luminous evidence of the fact." To this admirable book, the author's thank-offering for his own miraculous cure, the English translation of which can be procured everywhere, the reader is referred for the fullest and best account of the apparitions.

M. Artus, a gentleman of Paris, having witnessed the miraculous cure of his own niece, published in the newspapers a challenge to a wager of ten thousand francs, that not even two out of all the miracles related in Henry Lasserre's book could be disproved. There was no one found to accept the challenge.

Shortly after, a certain physician having asserted that Bernadette's was a mere case of hallucination, the same M. Artus again offered the same wager of ten thousand francs for its proof. At the same time, the Bishop of Nevers wrote to the physician, as follows:

"I have the honor to certify to you:

"1st. That Bernadette, now called Sister Mary Bernard, resides at Nevers, in the mother-house of the Sisters of Charity and Christian Instruction; that she entered and remains there with as perfect freedom as any of the other Sisters.

"2d. That far from being insane, Bernadette is a person of uncommon wisdom and of an incomparably charming character. And moreover, I will take

the liberty of inviting the said illustrious physician to come and verify in person the exactitude of my affirmation."

The learned doctor had not a word to reply, and was never heard from again.

The Water of the Miraculous Fountain.

Such quantities of the water have in late years been brought to this country, that it is now comparatively easy to obtain it. They who cannot procure it otherwise need only write to the *Father Superior of the Missionaries, Lourdes, France,* sending address in full, and the water will be forwarded, with no expense save that of transportation.

The following novena will be an excellent preparation for using it. Three Hail Marys, in honor of the Immaculate Conception, might be recited at the moment of using it.

The water is sometimes drunk, sometimes applied externally, sometimes used in both ways, according to the words of the Blessed Virgin to Bernadette. "Go, drink from and wash in the fountain."

Sometimes it is used every day during the novena, sometimes only on the last day, according to the quantity that can be procured.

Now, dear sufferer, may you, through the intercession of our dear Lady of Lourdes, recover your health or obtain whatsoever other favor you have to ask of her, and may you make use of it for the greater glory of God and for the honor of Mary Immaculate.

Should suffering render you incapable of reading the considerations, or of listening while they are read to you, use only the short prayer assigned for each day, and read the considerations at some later time.

N. B.—The use of the novena does not necessarily suppose the use of the water. Even without the latter, the considerations and prayers of the novena itself cannot fail to increase devotion and obtain blessings.

NOVENA

TO

Our Lady of Lourdes.

FOR THE USE OF THE SICK AND AFFLICTED

FIRST DAY.

How ready Mary is to help us.

I. This poor life is full of bitterness and sorrow. We all stand in need of help and comfort. Happy then are they who have learned to turn frequently to the sweet refuge of the unfortunate and comforter of the afflicted, our dear Mother Mary. Richard of Saint Lawrence assures us that Mary's compassion is extended to all who invoke her, were it only by a Hail Mary. An angel said to St. Bridget, that no one ever prays to Mary without obtaining help from her. She is so kind-hearted, said he, that no one ever fails to expe-

rience her goodness, who asks anything from God through her intercession.

II. Still more, so great is the compassion of this tender Mother toward us, so lively her interest in our welfare, that, says St. Liguori, she grants us assistance even before we ask it. St. Anselm says that Mary anticipates the prayer of those who desire her protection, such is her haste to help us. Hence we may conclude that she asks of God many graces for us, even before we have asked them for ourselves. We see an instance of this in what the Holy Gospel tells us of the marriage feast of Cana, in Galilee. It was not the spouses, though they were the interested parties, who asked the favor then granted by our Lord. It was Mary, who, seeing that the wine was failing, and compassionating their embarrassment, turned to her Divine Son, who, at her request, wrought his first miracle.

III. If then Mary is so ready to help us in our need, even when she is not asked, how much more readily must she come to our assistance when we implore her aid. St. Anselm, in order to increase our confidence in her, assures us, that when we address ourselves to the Mother of God, not only may we be sure of her assistance, but our prayers will often be even more quickly and abundantly answered through the invocation of her name, than through the invocation of the name of Our Lord. And let us not be startled at this assertion. "For," he says, "Jesus Christ, our Saviour, is also our Judge, and must consequently visit justice on our iniquities; while the Blessed Virgin, as our advocate and Mother, is bound to nothing but pity and affection."

PRAYER TO OUR LADY OF LOURDES.

O our dear Lady of Lourdes, bless me and help me. Thou, whom the

Saints have proclaimed so full of pity and kindness toward us,—thou, who art everywhere invoked with so much confidence,—thou, who hast deigned to appear in the grotto of Lourdes as a sweet messenger of grace and mercy, with a smile of motherly tenderness on thy lips,—show now thy goodness toward me, thy poor child. Obtain for me, I beseech thee, the graces I stand in need of for my sanctification; obtain for me patience in suffering; and if it be God's will, obtain for me restoration to health, (or whatever other favor is specially asked for in the novena.) Amen.

Our dear Lady of Lourdes, pray for us. (*Repeat three times.*)

SECOND DAY.

What influence Mary has with God.

I. Mary's power to help us is as great as her willingness to do it. St. Bernardin of Sienna goes so far as to

say that not only has Almighty God made Mary Queen of angels and of men, but He even deigns Himself to be subject to her sweet empire. By this the Saint does not mean, of course, that Mary has any authority of her own over the Divine Majesty, but that God so loves and honors her, that he grants her prayers even as if they were commands. St. Anselm thus addresses her: "The Lord so honors thee, O holy Virgin, that His favor renders thee all-powerful." It often happens that something asked of God is refused, but, when asked through Mary, is granted. Now why is this? "It is," answers Nicephorus, "not because Mary is more powerful than God, but because Our Lord has decreed so to do honor to His Mother."

II. Now perhaps you will ask what is the secret of this wonderful power possessed by Mary. It is because, as

was revealed to St. Bridget, Our Lord has pledged Himself never to reject a request of His Mother, since He could refuse nothing to her who had never refused Him anything on earth. And St. Gertrude heard the same dear Saviour saying to His holy Mother: "Know that, in virtue of my omnipotence, I give thee power to show mercy, in such manner as thou wilt, to every sinner that calls upon thee."

III. Moreover, St. Ambrose remarks that Our Lord Jesus Christ, by the very fact of making Mary His Mother, obliged Himself to be subject to her. Of the other saints it may be said that God is with them; but to Mary it has been granted not only that she should have the most perfect conformity to the will of God, but that God should conform Himself to her will, as the holy Gospel expressly declares of our Divine Saviour; and while the other

virgins follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth, the Lamb Himself followed the Blessed Virgin Mary while on earth, being subject to her. And now in heaven, though the Blessed Virgin no longer commands her Son, yet her prayers are always the prayers of a Mother, that is to say, they never meet a refusal.

Prayer to our Lady of Lourdes.

O our blessed Lady of Lourdes, thou whose influence with Almighty God is so great that thy prayers are never refused, have pity on me thy needy child. O Virgin most holy! O Virgin most powerful! turn not away from me, though all unworthy, nor disdain to plead in my behalf. Heed not my unworthiness, but the promptings of thy own heart, thou who art as rich in mercy as in power. Use thy boundless influence to obtain for me patience

in my sufferings, restoration to health (or other favor), and the grace to make a good use of it for the glory of God. Amen.

Our dear Lady of Lourdes, pray for us. (*Three times.*)

THIRD DAY.

What Confidence we ought to have in Mary.

I. Dear reader, methinks I hear you say: Ah! no doubt Mary is both good and powerful, but I have committed so many sins that I do not deserve to be heard. I answer: Are you more guilty than the devil? Well, St. Bridget tells us in her revelations, that she once heard our Lord say to the Blessed Virgin: "My Mother, thou wouldst be ready to ask pardon for Lucifer himself if he had recourse to thee." Now it is true that the proud fallen angel will never humble himself to ask Mary's

help; but in the supposition that he could and would do so, she would have clemency enough to ask for his pardon, and influence enough to obtain it. That which can never be realized in the case of the devil, takes place every day in regard to poor sinners who have recourse to this Mother of mercy.

II. Moreover, Mary declared to the same Saint that she is the Mother not only of the just and innocent, but also of sinners, provided only that they wish to amend their life. When a sinner casts himself at the feet of this bountiful Mother, with a firm determination to do better, he finds her more tender and compassionate than his own mother could be. The Queen of heaven is so full of pity for our wretchedness, that when a poor sinner has recourse to her, she never stops to reflect how little he deserves, or even how utterly undeserving he may be,—she only sees that

he is repentant, and opens her arms to receive him.

III. Pray to her then with confidence, poor sinners! Although prayer, says St. Bernard, has no beauty in the mouth of a sinner, because he is not in the state of grace, yet it is very useful and salutary toward escaping from the state of sin, because, as St. Thomas teaches, it helps him to obtain forgiveness; the efficacy of prayer being founded, not on the merits of him who prays, but on the goodness of God and the merits of Jesus Christ, who Himself assures us that whatever we ask in His name shall be granted us. So it is likewise with what we ask in the name of His most holy Mother. "If he who prays," says St. Anselm, "is not worthy to be heard, the merits of Mary, whose assistance he implores, will intercede for him."

Prayer to our Lady of Lourdes.

O our compassionate Lady of Lourdes, who hast shown thy affection for poor sinners by commanding Bernadette to pray for them and to get others to pray for them, exercise now thy compassion in my regard. O my Mother and my advocate, I know that my sins render me unworthy to approach thee; but I know also, sweet Refuge of sinners, that thy goodness will not reject me. I come to thee then with humble confidence. I lay all my miseries before thee, and implore thy help. O above all things obtain for me true repentance for my sins, and entire pardon for them. And if it be the holy will of God, obtain for me restoration to health, and the grace to make a good use of it for the glory of God.

Our dear Lady of Lourdes, pray for us.

FOURTH DAY.

Mary obtains for us the Pardon of our Sins.

I. Mary works in our behalf, in accordance with the plan of salvation marked out for us by Our Lord. Now, for the forgiveness of our sins, He has established the Sacrament of Penance. Hence Mary's efforts are directed toward obtaining for us the grace to make a good confession. For this she labors with a solicitude from which not even the most wretched sinner is excluded. Let us dwell still more on this consoling thought. Yes, it is true that the multitude of our sins must never diminish our confidence in Mary, when we wish to get back to God. A good mother does not shrink from attending her son when he is smitten with a contagious disease. So, neither does Mary turn away in disgust from our soul's maladies, no matter how loath-

some they may be. Nay, the greater is the wretchedness of the poor sinner, the greater is the compassion of this tender Mother. St. Bernard asks why the Church calls Mary the Mother of mercy, and answers: because no sinner, no matter how enormous his crimes have been, can perish, if he take refuge, repentant, under Mary's protection.

II. I am, said the holy Virgin to St. Bridget, I am the Queen of heaven and the Mother of mercy; I am the delight of the just, and the door through which poor sinners get to God; there is not one on earth to whom I refuse pity, not one that has not received some grace through my intercession, were it only to be less violently tempted by the devil. No sinner, she added, unless he be totally reprobate, (which can be the case only with the damned,) is so utterly rejected by God that he cannot return to grace through me.

III. Sinners, whoever you may be, should the grievousness of your sins make you doubt, not of Mary's power, but of her compassion in your regard, remember that, as she herself declared to a holy religious, after the title of Mother of God, there is none dearer to her than that of Refuge of sinners. St. Augustin, contemplating Mary's zeal in interceding for us, cries out to her: "Man has but one supporter before his Judge, and that one thou art." The other saints indeed pray for us; but so supremely do Mary's charity and power surpass theirs, that she may well be called our one protector, and, according to the forcible expression of St. Germanus, she never feels as if she were doing enough for us.

PRAYER TO OUR LADY OF LOURDES.

O our blessed Lady of Lourdes, I come to claim a share in thy boundless

compassion and goodness. Remember that thy mercy has never failed any one. Nay, permit me even to remind thee, that whatever gifts thou hast of grace and glory, even to thy divine maternity, thou owest all in a certain sense to poor sinners, since it was for sinners that God became thy Son. Look on me, then, O Mary, and bless me, and help me. Obtain for me purity of soul and health of body. Amen.

Our dear Lady of Lourdes, pray for us.

FIFTH DAY.

Mary is in a Special Manner the Protectress of France.

I. Twenty-five years ago, the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared at La Salette; twelve years after, took place her apparition in the grotto of Lourdes; and twelve years later still, she again mani-

fested herself as a sweet messenger of hope and mercy at Pontmain in Brittany. What other nation has ever been favored with apparitions so solemn and so closely succeeding one another? It would seem as if Mary, abandoning her native land, Judea, which crucified her Son, had chosen France for her second country, and one that she would never forsake. Happy country, thus specially privileged by the Mother of God!

II. The reason of these glorious favors is, that France has been for centuries so devoted to Mary, as to be preëminently her kingdom. The great Pope Benedict XIV. said of France: "*Regnum Galliæ, regnum Mariæ,*" "the kingdom of France is the kingdom of Mary;" and hence he added: "*Nunquam peribit,*" "that nation shall never perish." In these days of France's great temporal and spiritual distress,

Mary has visited her provinces of the East, the South, and the West, causing holy sanctuaries to be built in the scenes of her visitation, as beacons of hope and bulwarks of heavenly defence. Looking at things as God sees them, these three celestial visitations may well be ranked among the most important events in the modern history of France. Years before, Mary had said to the pious novice of St. Vincent de Paul, to whom she revealed the *miraculous medal:* "The part of the world in which you find my favors flowing the most abundantly, is France."

III. Hence it is that to the shrines of France pilgrims flock in thousands from every part of the world. In those holy places they feel, as well they may, nearer to God and to His holy Mother than elsewhere; and the Almighty shows His approval of it by the miracles

that take place in those holy shrines, and the evident blessings which attend the pilgrimages. Wherever you may be, dear reader, often take part, in spirit, in these holy pilgrimages. Let your soul repair frequently to those shrines of Mary, and specially to the richly favored grotto of Lourdes, there to spend sweet moments in loving homage, atonement and supplication.

Prayer to our Lady of Lourdes.

O our Lady of Lourdes, special protectress of France, we all unite in thanking thee for thy goodness to that favored country. O be her protectress now above all in these troublous times; dispel the cloud of sin and infidelity that now obscures her, and make her shine more brightly than ever with the light of faith and virtue. We thank thee too for the blessings which from her shrines, and especially

from Lourdes, thou hast dispensed throughout the world. Deign, dear Mother, to make me now a sharer in those blessings, both spiritual and temporal. O if it be the will of God, obtain for me restoration to health; but if that should be a danger to my soul, I ask only for resignation and patience unto the end. Amen.

Our dear Lady of Lourdes, pray for us.

SIXTH DAY.

After Mary's example we must endure our sufferings with patience.

I. Suffering came into the world through sin. Therefore, when we suffer, we must not attribute it to our good God, but to sin, the cause of all evil. God did not intend suffering for us; but now that we have brought it upon ourselves, He makes use of it for our salvation. He draws good out of evil.

He makes use of suffering to draw us to Him, as it were, in spite of ourselves. How many that had forgotten and abandoned God, have been brought back to Him by sickness and trials of various kinds! How many are in Heaven to-day, who would be in hell, were it not for the sufferings that brought them to their senses in time! And how many are now in hell, who would have been saved, had they only profited by the sufferings of life! In this sense, therefore, sufferings are truly "blessings in disguise."

II. Suffering is now a universal law here below. All must suffer, the just as well as sinners. It is even the inheritance which our Divine Lord has left to His best beloved. It is by sufferings that God tries the fidelity of His servants, and that He increases a hundred fold that merit and reward. Nothing so efficaciously detaches us

from the vanities of the world as suffering; nothing so surely casts a soul into the arms of God. Hence, see how much all the saints and friends of God have suffered. Abraham had his own son demanded of him. Jacob had to weep for years over Joseph, whom he believed dead. Moses had to die in the desert without entering into the promised land. Job was cast from the height of prosperity into an abyss of sorrow and humiliations. And so with many others, to say nothing of the martyrs and saints of the New Law. Remember the words of the angel Raphael to Tobias: "Because thou wast acceptable to God, it was necessary that tribulation should prove thee."

III. Hence, dear sufferer, you must never ask: "What have I done to God that He should thus afflict me?" What have you done? Do you then forget the multitude of sins you have com-

mitted, and for which you have never done adequate penance? What have you done to God? But had Mary done anything to Him? And yet you know that her life was one long suffering; her maternal heart had the sword of sorrow through it always; and yet she was without sin, she was the Mother of God, and full of grace. Mary never murmured, but endured her sufferings with most perfect patience. Imitate her example.

Prayer to our Lady of Lourdes.

O our sweet Lady of Lourdes, during thy whole life the bitter cup of suffering was always at thy lips, and thou didst never murmur. Alas! how different have been my dispositions! With all my heart I regret my want of generosity and resignation, and I now desire to do better. Obtain for me the courage and patience that I

need in all my trials, and especially in these present sufferings. I offer them up through thy hands in atonement for my sins, and for the good of the holy Church. Deign, our dear Lady of Lourdes, to obtain my cure. But should that not be for the good of my soul, obtain for me perfect resignation and patience. Amen.

Our dear Lady of Lourdes, pray for us.

SEVENTH DAY.

Where true consolation in suffering is to be found.

I. It is to be found in religion, and no where else. Religion unites our sufferings with those of our Lord and Saviour, and in that union with Him gives us peace and fortitude. A certain man who had long neglected the practice of religion, being brought to death's door by a protracted illness,

did at last what he ought to have done in the very commencement of his sickness, made his confession and received Holy Communion. The priest came again to see him in the evening of the happy day. "Well, my child," said he, "how do you feel since this morning? The good God has given you a great grace, has he not?" "Yes, yes, Father," he answered with gasping breath, but with an unutterable look in his face; "O yes, things go better since then; now *we are two*, I am no longer suffering *alone*."

II. When you are sick, remember that the priest is your first friend, your first physician. Send for him at once. Do not be afraid of him. The priest is the minister of the God of goodness; he brings with him only blessings and graces. People do not sufficiently understand the good he can do, the treasures of peace and resignation that

he spreads around him. A good lady, besides being blind for several years, was confined to her bed by an illness which she knew was incurable. "Do you suffer much?" they asked her one day. "Yes, very much," she answered quietly. "There are moments when I fear I will lose patience; but then I kiss my crucifix, and call upon our blessed Mother, and with her help I control myself."

III. "I knew at Paris," says Mgr. de Ségur, "a holy man who, after having lived without religion, came back to God with his whole soul. His fervor was extraordinary, his joyousness constant and exuberant. He often suffered exceedingly; but the more he suffered the more content he was. 'It is excellent,' he used to say, 'it is excellent. It shows that the good God has not forgotten me. It is good to suffer with our dear Saviour.' On his

death-bed, when he was already in his agony, I had the happiness to pay him a last visit. He seemed to be suffering terribly. 'Well, my poor dear friend,' said I, 'how do you feel?' 'Very well,' said he, with a meaning look; 'all is going well, very well.' 'Are you suffering much?' 'Yes, yes,' he answered, 'that is all right, all is going well.' A few hours, and he expired in this admirable fervor, in this holy love of Jesus crucified."

Prayer to our Lady of Lourdes.

O our dear Lady of Lourdes, who didst say to Bernadette: "I promise to make thee happy, not in this world but in the world to come," help me to be less intent upon the gratifications of this life, and more desirous of the happiness of heaven. Make me understand what treasures are hidden in suffering, that I may not waste them.

Enable me rightly to appreciate the strengthening and sanctifying sacraments, that I may receive them devoutly and profitably. O by thy bitter sufferings at the foot of the Cross, obtain for me patience in my sufferings, and, if it be the holy will of God, restoration to health. Amen.

Our dear Lady of Lourdes, pray for us.

EIGHTH DAY.

"I am the Immaculate Conception."

(Words of the Blessed Virgin to Bernadette.)

I. The Most Blessed Mary is immaculate,—that is to say, during her mortal life her soul was never stained with any sin, either actual or original. Through all the ages of the Church this has been believed, though not defined as an article of faith. But on the 8th of December, 1854, our Holy Father Pope Pius IX., in his capacity

of vicar of our Lord Jesus Christ, supreme head of the Church on earth, and infallible judge in matters of faith, gave the highest confirmation to this belief by solemnly defining that Mary was conceived without the stain of original sin. Hence it is a dogma of faith, as certain as the existence of one God in three Persons. This definition has been as much a cause of joy to heaven and earth, as it has been of rage to the impious and to the demons.

II. Now the apparition of our Blessed Lady at Lourdes is a miraculous confirmation of this dogma, an echo from heaven itself of the definition of Dec. 8th, 1854. Two declarations have affirmed to us Mary's Immaculate Conception. That of our Holy Father the Pope establishes our faith in it on the rock of infallibility; that made by Mary herself, attracts to it our tenderest devotion. Pius IX. spoke, and the

Christian world leaped for joy. But see what unparalleled majesty heaven has been pleased to give to his utterance. The holy Virgin herself, from her throne on high, appears on earth, in this lonely virgin grotto of the Pyrenees,—and hear what she declares in the most absolute manner: "*I am the Immaculate Conception.*"

III. What a motive of hope for Christians! The *sign of the Virgin* glistens in the Church's firmament, as a token of coming peace and glory. Under the banner of the Immaculate Conception, under the leadership of her Queen conceived without sin, the Church *will crush the serpent's head*, and God's enemies shall be dispersed. Let us all, like faithful Catholics, and children of Mary, be worthy of our Church and of our Queen. Walking in her footsteps, let us lead a sinless, holy life, strong in faith, fervent in prayer;

and often repeat the invocation: O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee.

PRAYER TO OUR LADY OF LOURDES.

O our blessed Lady of Lourdes, the Immaculate Conception, Virgin most pure and stainless, obtain for me the grace to be chaste, to avoid all occasions of sin, and to have recourse to prayer whenever I am tempted by the devil, the world, or the flesh. Let me rather die than live to commit sin. But if it be the holy will of God, O obtain for me my health, and grace to make use of it for practising virtue and gaining heaven. Amen.

Our dear Lady of Lourdes, pray for us.

NINTH DAY.

The Necessity of doing Penance.

I. "*Unless you do penance, you shall all perish.*" Such was the warning of

our Blessed Lord, such the theme of the preaching of the Apostles. Such, too, after nineteen centuries, is the teaching given us by the holy Virgin. In one of her apparitions to Bernadette, Mary's glance seemed to run in an instant over the whole earth, and then her look rested on the young girl at her feet, but it was a look full of pain and sorrow. "What is the matter with you?" murmured the child, "or what can I do for you?" "Pray for sinners," answered the Mother of mankind; and then she repeated three times: "Penance! penance! penance!" And Bernadette, advancing on her knees toward the interior of the grotto, repeated also: "Penance! penance! penance!"

II. Penance! People hardly understand what it means, in these our days, although it is the special need of our times, as we may understand from

Mary's thrice repeated call to penance. Why is it that our prayers are so seldom granted? It is because we do not give prayer the two wings that bear it most surely to the throne of God, namely, penance and works of mercy. The Holy Scripture tells us that *prayer is good*, but above all when united with *fasting and alms-deeds.* Without these, it is to be feared that it loses much of its efficacy. Alms-deeds touch the heart of God, while penance and mortification render us more fit to pray and more worthy to be heard. It is these two things above all that our piety lacks, but especially the latter; for people still give some alms, even if scantily, but who thinks now of penance and mortification as our fathers used to do?

III. Hence we need penance; we need suffering; it is the law of justice and atonement. Now, dear sufferer,

since you have the means of doing penance quite at hand in your present affliction, put it to good profit, and, as they say, *make a virtue of necessity.* Offer up your sufferings in atonement for your sins, and in union with the sufferings of our dear Saviour on Calvary, and thus you will even add greater efficacy to the prayers you offer up for your relief and cure. Do not say: "It is too hard to do that; I am incapable of it." Whenever Almighty God sends trials, He *always* — understand, I say *always* — gives also grace to profit by them. The divine hand that wounds us for our healing, is also the one that pours balm upon the wound. Remember, therefore, submission! love! trust! prayer!

PRAYER TO OUR LADY OF LOURDES.

O our Lady of Lourdes, who hast so strongly recommended penance, help

me to accept as I ought the penance which God sends me, and to profit by the sufferings which I have to bear. Enable me to understand rightly the wickedness of sin, and how terrible are its consequences for this life and for the life to come. And may this understanding make me eager to do all possible penance for the sins I have committed, and careful not to fall into them again. May this holy novena have the effect of lastingly increasing my devotion toward thee, dear Mother; and at its close I again beseech thee, if it be for the best, to obtain my restoration to health, though I add, in the sincerity of my soul, not my will, but God's will and thine be done. Amen.

Our dear Lady of Lourdes, pray for us.

CONCLUSION.

The Blessed Virgin always Hears our Prayers.

I. The parish priest of Lourdes, wishing a sign of the truth of the apparitions, told Bernadette to ask of the Blessed Virgin that the wild rose-bush, growing out of the rock beneath where she used to stand, should bloom, it being then the month of February. When Bernadette presented this request to Mary, the holy Virgin only smiled. But the next day, instead of the small and transient sign asked for by the priest, the Mother of God granted a far greater one by causing a miraculous fountain to spring forth. The blooming of the rose-bush would have been only a single miracle, that would have passed with its next withering; whereas the miraculous fountain is not only a great miracle in itself,

but a constant source of many other miracles. O how much better the Blessed Virgin knows what is for the best than we do!

II. In like manner, dear sufferer, be sure that our good Mother always receives our prayers with a loving smile. Often she does not grant us *all* the favors and consolations we ask, nor just *such* as we ask; but it is because she loves us more wisely than we know how to love ourselves. Sometimes she obtains for us the very contrary of what we ask, because that is what we need, and she knows better than we what is best for us. But rest assured, says Mgr. de Ségur, that Mary always hears our prayer and obtains for us the graces and blessings of God, often more than we asked for. In heaven we shall see with what motherly love she has ever watched over her servants, and from what dangers she has saved them.

III. Hasten, then, to the dear Holy Virgin whenever you are in affliction or suffering of any kind. Ask her for patience more ardently than for relief; for holiness, more ardently than for any earthly benefit. Never ask for temporal favors, except on condition that you should use them for the good of your soul. Pray to her then with all your heart; love her devotedly; she will be with you as your sweet helper and comforter, during the whole course of your life, and at the hour of your death.

Blessed be the holy and *Immaculate Conception* of the Blessed Virgin Mary!

PRAYER TO OUR LADY OF LOURDES.

O Immaculate Virgin,
Mother of mercy,
Health of the weak,
Refuge of sinners,
Comforter of the afflicted,

Thou knowest our needs and our

sufferings. Deign to look on us pityingly, and to help us bountifully. By appearing in the grotto of Lourdes, thou hast shown that thou didst wish it to be a privileged spot, whence thou shouldst dispense thy favors with special abundance. Already, very many have there found the cure both of their souls and of their bodies.—Though we are so far distant from that holy place, yet even from afar we call to thee, O dear Lady of Lourdes, and ask that we may be sharers in those blessings. Hear our humble prayer, O loving and beloved Mother; help us in our bodily needs and spiritual infirmities; may our gratitude for thy favors make us still more careful to imitate thy virtues during all our life, that so we may one day come to share with thee in the glory of heaven. Amen.

Our dear Lady of Lourdes, pray for us.

Short Indulgenced Prayers.

The sick often complain that they "cannot say their prayers." It would indeed be unreasonable to expect that they should be able to repeat long formulas of prayer. It is not best that they should even try to do so.—Short loving prayers, frequently repeated, will be found not only easier, but more profitable. The following ejaculations, having indulgences attached to them, may be specially recommended. The friends of the sick should frequently suggest one or another of them to the sufferer.

My Jesus, mercy! (100 *days indulgence.*)

Jesus! Mary! (25 *days.*)

Jesus, Mary, Joseph, I give you my heart and my soul. (100 *days.*)

Jesus, Mary, Joseph, assist me in my last agony. (100 *days.*)

Jesus, Mary, Joseph, may I die in peace, in your blessed company. (100 *days.*)

O sweet Jesus, be not my Judge, but my Saviour. (80 *days.*)

Make devoutly the sign of the Cross. (50 *days.*)

Kiss the crucifix with respect. (*A year.*)

O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee. (100 *days.*)

May the most just, most high, most adorable will of God, be in all things done, and praised, and forever magnified. (100 *days, once a day.*)

Blessed be the holy and Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. (100 *days.*)

The Litany of Our Lady of Lourdes.

Lord, have mercy on us.
Christ, have mercy on us.
Lord, have mercy on us.
Christ, hear us.
Christ, graciously hear us.
God the Father of heaven, have mercy on us.
God the Son, Redeemer of the world, have mercy on us.
God the Holy Ghost, have mercy on us.
Holy Trinity, one God, have mercy on us.
OUR LADY OF LOURDES, pray for us.

Mother, who art the Model of all Mothers,
Mother, who didst suffer so much,
Mother, who wast poor and shelterless,
Mother, who didst journey to Bethlehem amid the hardships and cold of winter,
Mother, who didst find for thy Son and thy God no refuge but the stable grotto, and no cradle but a manger,
Who hast declared: I AM THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION,
Who didst appear to an humble peasant girl, to teach us humility,

Our Lady of Lourdes, pray for us.

Who wast clothed with a snow-white robe, to teach us purity,
Who didst wear an azure-blue girdle, to remind us of heaven,
Who didst stand with the thorny rose-bush under thy feet, to remind us that we are to get to heaven by suffering in this life,
Who didst carry a rosary in thy hand, to exhort us to prayer,
Who didst keep thy hands joined and thy eyes raised toward heaven, to exhort us to penance,
Who art the Star of Hope,
Who wilt save Rome and our Holy Father the Pope,
Who wilt save France,
Who dost intercede for us with the Sacred Heart of Jesus,
Who dost help and strengthen the clergy, in their labors for souls,
Who dost heal the sick,
Who art the health of the weak,
Who art the Refuge of sinners,
Who art the Comfortress of the afflicted,

Our Lady of Lourdes, pray for us.

O Our Lady of Lourdes, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee.

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, spare us, O Lord.
Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, graciously hear us, O Lord.
Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.
Christ, hear us. Christ, graciously hear us.
℟. Pray for us, O Our Lady of Lourdes, Holy Mother of God.
℣. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

LET US PRAY.

O our dear Lady of Lourdes, who under that sweet title hast already wrought so many miracles, stretch forth thy loving and powerful hand to protect our Holy Father the Pope, to save France, and to help us who implore thy aid. Obtain that our hearts may be filled with the spirit of faith, hope, and charity. Believing as we do in the truth of thy apparitions, and in thy boundless influence with thy Divine Son, we have recourse to thee in our need. Save Rome! Save France! Obtain for us the favor which we ask through thy intercession. Amen.

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ESTABLISHED IN THE

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Dec. 8th, 1872, *by Mgr. Pichenot.*

1. All persons without distinction are admitted to membership.

2. The person's name in full must be sent *to the Superior of the Missionaries at Lourdes, France.* (No other direction than this is necessary.)

3. A card of admission, indicating the conditions to be complied with, is sent to each applicant.

4. A mass is offered up every day in the church of our Lady of Lourdes, for the Pope, for France, and for all the members of the confraternity.

THE

ARCHCONFRATERNITY

OF

The Immaculate Conception

Of the Blessed Virgin Mary,

(Or of Our Lady of Lourdes,)

Was canonically established at Notre Dame, Indiana, with Episcopal Approbation on the 8th of December, 1874, and is affiliated to the Archconfraternity erected in the Church of Our Lady of Lourdes, by a special decree from Rome.

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